



ANNUAL REPORT
OF
DELAWARE COMMISSION
FOR THE BLIND

305 W. EIGHTH STREET
WILMINGTON, DELAWARE

FOR
FISCAL YEAR
JULY 1, 1959 TO JUNE 30, 1960

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FOREWORD

Again, we of the Delaware Commission for the Blind have reason to be proud of the accomplishments of our staff and of our many blind people throughout the State who have done so much to conquer blindness. Naturally, our rehabilitation efforts have not been one hundred percent successful in restoring blind people to active participation in society within the limitations imposed by age and individual endowments, but the degree of success is gratifying.

The following pages will set forth the record as made and described by pertinent staff members. Here, we will limit ourselves to calling attention to certain outstanding occurrences and achievements.

First, a note of sadness: our revered colleague, Dr. Emil R. Mayerberg, member of the Commission and tireless worker on behalf of the blind of Delaware for twenty-seven years, passed away in May. Active to the very end, incapable of sitting on the sidelines and watching others do, he was stricken while performing a deed of mercy. He will be difficult to replace.

Another Commissioner, Mrs. James R. Morford, who was an effective and respected colleague, has sent in her resignation, inasmuch as she is now living outside Delaware.

We are happy to report that one of our totally blind placements, Mr. Allmond Blackwell, a dark-room technician at Memorial Hospital in Wilmington, was selected by the Governor's Committee for Employment of the Handicapped to be the most recent winner of the Committee's award for notable achievement. Mr. Blackwell has overcome much to

arrive where he is. The road back was long and hard, and we are proud of the part that our vocational rehabilitation department, notably Mr. Norman Balot, had in guiding Mr. Blackwell along it to the coveted goal of competency and acceptance.

Fifteen of our little blind children were again among the campers at Fairlee Manor, a facility operated by the Delaware Society for Crippled Children and Adults on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. Reports from the children and their parents are glowing. And our own camp for the adult blind, Landis Lodge, had another of its successful seasons, the last, incidentally, under the supervision of Mrs. Katherine Cummings, its long-time director. Again, the task of finding a new leader here will not be easy.

All in all, a very successful year is chronicled in the ensuing pages. To all those who made this success possible, our thanks. Especially do we wish to mention his Excellency, Governor Boggs, ever our firm friend; our stalwart friends in the Legislature, without whose support much of our work would not be possible; our colleagues in cooperating State and voluntary agencies, notably Mr. John G. King, of the Rehabilitation Division of the State Board for Vocational Education, Mr. Thomas W. Mulrooney, Director of the Department of Child Development and Guidance of the Wilmington Public Schools, and Mr. Richard LeClair of the Delaware Society for Crippled Children and Adults; and among the volunteers, Mrs. Pierce K. Crompton and her colleagues of the Garden Clubs, and the devoted friends of the Volunteers Service of the Welfare Council and of the Delta Gamma Fraternity.

DELAWARE COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND

MEMBERS	RESIDENCE
Mrs. Irene duPont, <i>Honorary Chairman</i>	Granogue
Mrs. Jessie C. Wilson, <i>Chairman</i>	Dover
J. Francis Blaine, <i>Secretary</i>	Wilmington
Harold W. Horsey, <i>Treasurer</i>	Dover
*Emil R. Mayerberg, M.D., <i>Asst. Treas.</i>	Westover Hills
Mrs. James R. Morford	Cedars
Mrs. James E. Marvil	Laurel
Francis J. Cummings, Ph.D., <i>Exec. Sec'y.</i>	Wilmington

OPHTHAMOLOGICAL CONSULTANTS

*Emil R. Mayerberg, M.D.
Norman L. Cutler, M.D.

MEDICAL CONSULTANT

Martin B. Pennington, M.D.

COMMISSION MEETINGS

Regular Commission meetings are held monthly with the exception of the summer months of June, July, August and September. Special meetings are held whenever called. The annual meeting, during which officers are elected, is held in October. Meetings are held at the Commission headquarters unless otherwise specified.

PRINCIPAL OFFICE

305 W. Eighth Street, Wilmington 1, Delaware
F. J. CUMMINGS, Ph.D., *Executive Secretary*

*Deceased May 1960

DEFINITION OF BLINDNESS

“Blind person” means one who is totally blind or has visual acuity of not more than 20/200 in the better eye with best correction, or whose vision is limited in field so that the widest diameter subtends an angle no greater than 20 degrees.

MANDATORY REPORTING

The laws of the State of Delaware (Title 31, Section 2109) require that every health and social agency, attending or consulting physician, or nurse, shall report to the Commission for the Blind, in writing, the name, age and residence of persons who are blind within the definition of blindness as indicated above, and in such cases shall furnish such additional information as the Commission requests for registration or prevention of blindness.

In spite of our efforts to publicize this requirement of Delaware law, many persons in the State are seemingly unaware of it. In the interests of the blind people of our State, the Commission respectfully but strongly urges that Title 31, Section 2109 be more widely observed.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM

The onset of blindness is a depressing and confusing matter. It presents to the individual a world in which he is greatly limited; physically, socially, and vocationally. It is the goal of the Vocational Rehabilitation program of the Commission to help its clients understand that they CAN function satisfactorily in their communities, and that there IS a place in the work world for them. This is as much a matter of community and societal education as it is one of individual reeducation, for not only does the blind person bring with him the ingrained, stereo-typed public attitude toward blindness, he is constantly exposed to these attitudes while striving to achieve a modicum of adjustment.

Vocational Rehabilitation deals with the blind clients on many levels; the physical, psychological, social and vocational. Complete physical, ophthalmological and specialty examinations (when needed) are obtained to determine the extent to which any other limiting factors affect normal functioning. Counseling, diagnostic services and training



This smiling young lady is shown at her desk in the Delaware Hospital, Wilmington, where she is successfully employed as a Medical Secretary.

in areas which will be of benefit to the client, i.e., instruction in independent traveling and schooling are offered in order to optimally prepare for employment. Job placement services are then inaugurated. In the case of blinded housewives, the goal will be adjustment to the duties involved in maintaining a home, cooking, etc.

All services are provided at no cost to the individual if financial need is present. However, no matter what the financial status, physical, ophthalmological and specialty examinations, counseling training and placement are provided free of charge.

The blind workers and housewives of Delaware have set a fine example, not only for those who are now seeking adjustment to blindness but also to the general community. We are proud to have been a factor in their adjustment to the problems connected with blindness and their action in community life.

Number of persons referred for services	52
Number of persons accepted for services	28
Number of persons placed in suitable employment:	
Industrial	4
Clerical	4
Custodian	3
Vending Stands	2
Home Care and Management	2
Sheltered Shop	4
	—
Total	19
Services provided:	
General medical examinations	34
Eye Examinations	24
Specialty Examinations	5
Eye Surgery	3
Optical Aids	7
Other Physical Restoration Services	10
Personal Adjustment and Training Services	29
Diagnosis	9

BUSINESS ENTERPRISES PROGRAM

The Commission for the Blind has been designated by the Federal government as the licensing agency for the State's Business Enterprises Program, under which capable blind men and women are trained to operate vending stands, snack bars and cafeterias in public and private buildings, factories and other suitable locations. The purpose of the program is to provide continuous, substantial employment for visually handicapped persons, enabling them to become useful, self-supporting members of their community.

In operating the program, management is ever mindful of the newest improvements in equipment and design, and competent supervisory staff is provided to assure the most efficient service at all times. Apart from construction and supervision, it is a completely self-supporting and strictly non-profit program, all proceeds accruing to the operators and assistants in the form of salaries, bonuses and periodic cash distributions.

Within the fiscal year just ended, the Business Enterprises program operated 18 full-time units and one part-time unit throughout the State, giving employment to 18 visually handicapped operators. In addition, training in vending stand operation and management was afforded two visually handicapped clients. Gross receipts at all stands continued upward, which in turn was reflected in the all-time high earnings of our blind operators.



*Employee's Cafeteria
National Vulcanized Fibre Co. — Yorklyn*

As a result of successful negotiations completed during the past year, two additional units are already under construction, and a third is in the planning stage.

We are indeed grateful to all whose cooperation and support contributes so much to the deeply gratifying success of this very worthwhile investment in human dignity; and to our dedicated staff, whose unstinted giving of time and talent has been so effective in making Delaware's business enterprises program one of the best in the country.

Gross Income	\$461,545.00
Total salaries paid to blind operators	84,501.83
Total salaries paid to necessary sighted assistants	87,303.98
Average annual salary received by blind operators	5,994.48
Average weekly salary received by blind operators	124.89

WORKSHOP

The purpose of the Commission's Workshop is twofold: 1—to provide training and employment experience which will develop in the more capable clients good work habits and other attributes essential for their movement into competitive employment; 2—steady, year 'round employment for those who are not candidates for competitive employment.



A group of busy people in the Commission's workshop.

We are making steady progress toward this goal, and during the past year 43 visually handicapped workers were employed in our workshop on either a full or part-time basis, with total earnings of \$26,323.22, an increase of almost 2/3 above last year's earnings.

We have continued to manufacture an increasing volume of rubberized fabric link mats for government agencies and for army, navy and air force supply depots from Maine to Florida, and some for export, amounting to a total of \$14,893.12.

There has also been a continuing demand for rubber link mats, plastic mats, ironing board covers and pads, amounting to \$3,344.00

Local industry has provided sub-contract work in tag stringing, enclosures, swatches, and advertising samples in increasing volume and variety, amounting to a total of \$13,882.98.

While we have just begun to develop the full possibilities of employment in the sub-contract field, this activity is now badly crowding our facilities. Work is available in Wilmington to provide greater employment if we had adequate facilities to handle it. Our need is for a shop with sufficient work area—preferably on one floor for convenience of handicapped workers, together with adequate storage, shipping and elevator facilities.

FINANCIAL AID TO THE BLIND

The form of Public Assistance authorized in the Social Security Act (Title X) known as Aid to the Blind is administered in Delaware by the Commission for the Blind in conformity with the Act, Delaware Law, and an agreement between the Agency and the Department known as the "Plan". This is a program financed by the Federal and State governments according to a formula which is subject to change, through which any resident of Delaware who is certified as legally blind may apply for and receive a money grant if he is eligible for it according to the requirements specified in the State Plan. These requirements are as liberal as possible considering the specifications contained in the Social Security Act, Delaware Law, and funds available to the Agency.

Of the 737 legally blind persons known to the Agency as of June 30, 1960, 248 received Aid to the Blind—or about thirty-three percent; less than a year ago.

The average grant in June of 1960 was \$71.50 as compared to the national average of \$72.81, and represented a change of minus 7.5 percent over the year according to statistics released by the Dept. of Health, Education, and Welfare. This average includes the amount spent through the Vendor Payment program for eye surgery, prostheses and nursing home care. Many of the Aid to the Blind grants are made to supplement Social Security benefits (Old Age and Survivors Insurance, Disability and Disabled Children's benefits), and the average grant reflects directly any liberalization of the Social Security eligibility requirements. There are some legally blind residents of Delaware whose Social Security benefits are adequate to meet their needs as defined by the Agency and who are, therefore, ineligible for an Aid to the Blind grant.

Due to the regrettable upward spiral of the cost of living, the Agency is not satisfied that present standards are adequate. These standards will be revised in problem areas as soon as concrete information can be obtained. The excessive cost of medical care for persons to whom clinic services are not available, the unreasonable rents collected in slum areas, and food costs are the three items causing the greatest concern, since no client can live without food, shelter and adequate medical care.

The Agency is especially interested in the proposed national legislation for the medical care of the aged, since blindness is essentially an “old-age” problem and often is the by-product of a systemic ailment such as diabetes and cardio-vascular disorders (example—hypertension). A goodly percentage of the present Aid to the Blind caseload is paying medical charges in excess of the maximum that can be allowed in the grant under present standards; the same is true for rent and food.

The establishment and use of standards to determine need for public assistance administration is, of necessity, an on-going process, but in times of economic upheaval such as we are now experiencing, the need for adjustment is especially pressing. Furthermore, this situation is not unique in Delaware, as witnessed by the proposed Federal legislation to provide funds for medical care of people over sixty-five years of age. It should be recognized that any public assistance program which does not allow a client to maintain a standard of living compatible with decency and health is defeating the purpose of the Social Security Act and the Law of the State of Delaware. It is the Agency’s duty to reconcile these various factors and meet the needs of its clients as adequately as possible.

Aid to the Blind applications pending July 1, 1959	6
Aid to the Blind applications received July 1, 1959 - June 30, 1960	53
	<hr/> 59
Applications approved	49
Denied or terminated	6
	<hr/> 55
Applications pending July 1, 1960	4

SOCIAL SERVICE

All services of the Agency are available to all legally blind persons in Delaware, except Aid to the Blind, for which the applicant must demonstrate need. A qualified, energetic and devoted staff is ready at all times to give personal and family counselling; whatever training is needed for adjusting to limited vision, such as travel techniques, braille reading and writing, etc.; and help with the acquiring of special appliances and instruction in their use.

The Agency continues to distribute and maintain Talking Book machines, furnished free of charge to

blind people by the Library of Congress. Records for these machines are distributed in Delaware by the Library for the Blind in Philadelphia, at no charge to the client. Subject matter recorded covers the whole field of reading material so that the individual can select what he enjoys. There are 152 talking book machines in use at the present time, and all who use them thoroughly enjoy them.

As a special service to its talking book readers, the agency distributes directly on request and at no cost, recorded issues of the READERS DIGEST, NEWS OF THE WEEK IN REVIEW, NEWSWEEK, together with THE UPPER ROOM and Books of the Holy Bible. A total of 56 clients enjoyed one or more of the publications listed.

A number of popular periodicals in Braille such as READERS DIGEST, RADIO NEWS, CHRISTIAN RECORD, etc., are circulated on request to clients in all parts of the State, and a small number of braille books are kept on loan. However, most of our clients being in the older age group, have been unable to master the reading of braille, and this together with the constant improvement in material and service to our talking book readers, has caused a steady decrease in the demand for braille reading material. A total of 20 clients made use of our braille library services during the past year.

The American Foundation for the Blind supplies radios for loan to blind people which the Agency distributes and services free of charge. There are approximately 130 such radios in use at the present time, 18 of which were issued during fiscal 1959-1960.

Volunteer readers, drivers and guides are obtained for blind clients and agency personnel through the Volunteer Bureau of the Welfare Council, and from other sources, by staff members. To these fine people, who give so generously of their time and talents, goes much of the credit for the success of our efforts.

PREVENTION AND CONSERVATION

Agency personnel are very conscious that the consensus of professional opinion is that half of the people who become blind do so unnecessarily—that early detection and treatment would save the sight

of fifty percent of these unfortunates. For this reason clients are constantly urged to follow their eye doctors' instructions, to go regularly for check-ups, to use medication as prescribed, to obtain and use visual aids, to obtain and use medical advice for the detection and control of ailments which affect vision, etc.

The Commission authorizes payment for eye examinations, surgery, visual aids, etc., for those who are not financially able to do so; as well as making appointments and furnishing transportation when necessary. During September, which is "Sight-Saving Month", the Agency cooperates with the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness by bringing the importance of proper eye care before the public.

It would be impossible for the Commission to function as efficiently as it does without the cooperation of the medical profession, the hospital clinics, other state agencies, the service clubs and private agencies. It is a pleasure to report that there is scarcely ever a case in which such cooperation is not graciously given.

During the year ten (10) authorizations for eye examinations were made, three (3) prostheses were provided, and one (1) case in which vision was restored by surgery. (This is in addition to similar services provided under the Vocational Rehabilitation program.) Many other clients receive free service (check-ups, treatment, etc.,) through the excellent clinics in the Wilmington area.

Persons not legally blind but requesting assistance were referred to the State Board of Health, and to the various service clubs, who cooperated with the Commission in providing needed services.

DISABILITY DETERMINATIONS

Under an agreement between the Bureau of Old Age and Survivors Insurance of the Social Security Administration, the Delaware Commission for the Blind makes Disability Determinations on all applications for Disability Benefits that claim "blindness" as the disability. The benefits may be a monthly check or a "freeze" for a person under fifty years of age. Although the Disability program is essentially a Federal one, the States participate actively in this.

Comparatively speaking, this program in the Agency is small—twenty cases having been processed in the fiscal year ending June 30, 1960—but it is important as it is a means of case-finding and offers a chance to render valuable service.

As this goes to press consideration is being given to various amendments to the Social Security Act, which if enacted will result in a significant increase in the number of cases handled.



Happy Days at Camp Fairlee, Chestertown, Md.

EDUCATION

Under Chapter 21, Sec. 2104 of the Delaware Code the Commission has been given responsibility for the general supervision and control of the education of Delaware's blind children. In carrying out this grave responsibility it is our policy to consider each child individually and to endeavor to secure for him the educational facilities best suited to his needs, working closely throughout the year with the various school authorities in the interests of the blind children enrolled in their educational programs.

The Braille Classes, initiated on an experimental basis by the Wilmington Public Schols in collaboration with the Commission, are now in their fourth year, and results, have been most gratifying. Under this arrangement many of our blind children are enabled to attend public school in or close to their home community. Close cooperation with the Wilmington Public School staff is maintained to assure maximum development, both academically and socially, for each of the children in this group.

Periodic visits by staff members to the Maryland School for the Blind, and individual school reports, indicate that the large group enrolled here at Delaware expense, is making satisfactory progress.

Close check has been kept on all visually handicapped children attending regular and special classes in public and private schools throughout the State, and a staff member is available to the teaching personnel of the various schools at all times for consultation and advice.

In addition to the children enrolled in the various educational settings, the Commission continues its deep interest in the welfare of the pre-school blind. Staff members, experienced in this area, visit the homes and offer guidance and encouragement to parents in meeting their special problems and help in securing all community resources available to them.

The Commission's educational program also encompasses the needs of the children residing at the Hospital for the Mentally Retarded and the GBHC, and in cooperation with the hospital staffs, provides instruction geared to the learning capacity of the children and guidance in attaining some measure of self-care.

Also, in the area of education, we are pleased to report that once again, in cooperation with the Delaware Society for Crippled Children and Adults, 15 blind children enjoyed, at Commission expense, two happy weeks at Camp Fairlee, Chestertown, Md. The many new experiences gained and the friendships formed will aid immeasurably in the well-rounded, normal development of these alert and active youngsters.

We wish to express our appreciation to the members of Delta Gamma Fraternity and other devoted friends for providing to our children attending the Braille Classes at the Lore School braille material



Delaware's blind children can look confidently to the future, knowing that every possible advantage will be provided to them.

not otherwise available to them. We wish also to express our deep appreciation to all public and private organizations who have cooperated so generously and effectively with us in meeting the needs of our visually handicapped children.

Following is the number of children registered with the Agency according to the schools attended during the past year:

- 18—Braille Classes at Lore School, Wilmington
- 21—Maryland School for the Blind, Overlea,
Baltimore, Maryland
- 21—Regular classes, public and private schools
- 6—Special classes, public and private schools

HOME TEACHING

Our Home Teaching Services are designed to meet the individual needs of the client who has become blind in his adult years, to train him to make full use of his abilities, and to assist him both personally and socially to adjust to the handicap of blindness so that he is able to live efficiently and successfully within his own environment.

He is taught such important activities of daily living as dialing the telephone, handling money, telling time by touch, threading a needle, etc. Many clients also require instruction in personal grooming, orientation and travel; and to those who can benefit, lessons are given in braille reading and writing, typing, pencil writing and handicrafts.

As in all Agency programs, the home teacher works closely with community agencies, ophthalmologists and other professional workers in the best interests of the client.

During the past year our home teaching staff made approximately 1500 calls on clients in all parts of the State, giving instruction and guidance as needed in the areas above listed.



A day at the Phillies ball park.

RECREATION

This past year interest increased so much among the blind bowlers of this area that Wilmington had two teams entered in the Interstate Blind Bowler's League, one sponsored by the Commission and the other by the Wilmington Lions Club. Trophies won by the teams are on display for public inspection at Commission headquarters.



Taking off for a day's deep sea fishing.

Trips to Connie Mack Stadium in Philadelphia, deep sea fishing trips, theatre parties to the Brandywine Music Box and Robin Hood Theatre, were among other recreational activities sponsored by the Commission during the past year. We extend to the management of the Phillies Ball Park and the management of the Brandywine Music Box and Robin Hood Theatre our deep gratitude for their cooperation in making possible so much wholesome enjoyment to Delaware's blind citizens.

Our annual Christmas Party for the blind was held again last year at the YMCA, 11th & Washington Sts., Wilmington, and was attended by over 200. Following excellent entertainment provided by several talented blind folks, members of the Delaware State Police and others, refreshments were served and gifts distributed. As in previous years, the Wilmington Lions Club cooperated with the Commission in making this a most pleasurable occasion for all who participated.

LANDIS LODGE

During the past fiscal year a total of 78 blind folks from all parts of the State enjoyed two weeks of carefree relaxation as guests of Landis Lodge, our vacation center on Newport Gap Pike, Wilmington.

Picnics and planned recreation were arranged by staff members, and guests were further entertained several days each week with music, games and refreshments provided by interested friends and civic minded groups, notably the Wilmington Lions Club. As in former years, the' Wilmington Council of Churches arranged inspiring Sunday devotions for our guests throughout the season. The beauty and fragrance of the lovely rose garden provided through the thoughtfulness and generosity of the ladies of the local Garden Clubs again provided much pleasure to our guests and to all who visited Landis Lodge.

STATE USE BILL

Under provisions of Title 31, Section 2115 of the Delaware Code, State Agencies are required to purchase goods and services from the Commission for the Blind, when such goods and services are equal in quality and price with those available through other channels. An excellent working relationship has been established by the Commission with most State Agencies.

MISCELLANEOUS

The Commission serves as Delaware's clearing house for all matters pertaining to work for the blind. Blind people, their families, or groups interested in the welfare of the blind may secure through the Commission information about the work for the blind anywhere. Also, the Commission acts as middleman in the securing for blind Delawareans of free radios, braille-transcription service, railroad and bus travel concessions, movie passes, special appliances for the blind including braille watches, braille cooking timers, etc., white canes and other devices calculated to reduce for the blind person the difficulty of living independently. A display of special appliances for the blind may be seen at the Commission headquarters.



Home of Delaware Commission for the Blind.

REGISTRATION OF SOLICITORS

Under provisions of Title 31, Section 2116 of the Delaware Code, the Commission is given the responsibility of licensing agencies or individuals outside Delaware who wish to solicit funds in Delaware for the welfare of blind people. The following agencies have been given permits:

American Foundation for the Blind
15 W. 16th Street, New York 11, N. Y.

American Foundation for Overseas Blind
22 W. 17th Street, New York 11, N. Y.

Blind Artists Concerts
34 S. 17th St., Philadelphia, Pa.

Christian Record Benevolent Association, Inc.
3705 S. 48th St., Lincoln 6, Nebraska

Any other non-Delaware agency or individual soliciting funds in Delaware purportedly for the benefit of the blind is doing so in opposition to State Law.

FINANCIAL REPORT

July 1, 1959 to June 30, 1960

STATE FUNDS

	RECEIVED	EXPENDED
Administration	\$ 62,500.00	\$ 62,500.00
General Operating Costs	29,000.00	29,000.00
Materials	10,000.00	10,000.00
Repairs and Replacements	6,500.00	6,500.00
Assistance Grants	95,000.00	70,386.26
Education	49,100.00	35,130.55
TOTALS	\$252,100.00	\$213,516.81

FEDERAL VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION FUNDS

Balance on hand 7-1-59	\$ 392.50	
Appropriation	37,020.50	
Administration		12,067.27
Vocational Guidance		16,381.27
Case Service		6,140.89
Specialized Facilities		1,924.88
Staff Training Program		80.39
TOTALS	\$ 37,413.00	\$ 36,594.70

FEDERAL AID TO THE BLIND FUNDS

Balance on Hand 7-1-59	\$ 26,315.09	
Appropriation	140,826.07	
Refunds and Reimbursements	2,346.50	
Administration		16,905.15
Assistance Grants		143,644.62
TOTALS	\$169,487.66	\$160,549.77

FEDERAL OLD AGE AND SURVIVOR'S INSURANCE FUNDS

Balance on Hand 7-1-59	\$ 350.28	
Appropriation	815.08	
Administration		771.62
TOTALS	\$ 1,165.36	\$ 771.62

BALANCES JUNE 30, 1960

State Funds	38,583.19*
Federal Vocational Rehabilitation Funds	818.30**
Federal Aid to the Blind Funds	8,937.89
Federal Old Age & Survivor's Insurance Funds	393.74
GRAND TOTALS	\$460,166.02 \$460,166.02

*Reverted to State Treasurer.

**Balances shown in Federal funds will be deducted from next year's Federal Allotments.

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